

REMARKS

This is in response to the Office Action dated September 26, 2007. In view of the foregoing amendments and following representations, reconsideration is respectfully requested.

By the above amendment, claims 1 and 8 are amended to clearly distinguish the present invention over the applied prior art references. Thus, claims 1-3 and 8-12 are currently pending in the present application.

On pages 3-5 of the Office Action, the claims are rejected over the prior art as follows:

Claims 1, 3 and 8 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Tomita et al.;

Claim 2 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Tomita in view of Masui;

Claim 9 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Tomita in view of Hashimoto et al. (USPN 5,945,161) or Costigan et al. (USPN 6,090,534);

Claims 10 and 11 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Tomita in view of Hashimoto et al. (or Costigan) and further in view of Masui; and

Claim 12 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Tomita in view of Tanaka et al. (USPN 5,823,130).

It is submitted that the present invention, as embodied by independent claims 1 and 8, clearly distinguishes over the applied prior art references for the following reasons.

The present invention, as embodied by claim 1, requires, *inter alia*, an apparatus for processing a substrate that is provided with a vertically movable scattering prevention cup having a tapered portion whose diameter is progressively larger downwardly, a smaller-diameter portion connected to an upper end of the tapered portion, and a larger-diameter portion connected to a lower end of the tapered portion.

In accordance with the claimed apparatus, when the scattering prevention cup 18 is positioned in the substrate transfer position shown in FIG. 1, the substrate W can freely be transferred between a robot hand or the like and the substrate holding chucks 14 of the substrate

holder 16 without physical interference with the scattering prevention cup 18 (see page 8, lines 6-22 of the present specification). When the scattering prevention cup 18 is positioned in the scattering prevention position shown in FIG. 2, a chemical liquid (substrate processing liquid), which treats the substrate W, is blocked primarily by the tapered portion 18a and is prevented from being scattered around. When the scattering prevention cup 18 is positioned in the cleaning position shown in FIG. 3, a cleaning liquid (substrate processing liquid), which cleans the substrate W, is blocked by the smaller-diameter portion 18b, and flows down along the inner wall surface of the scattering prevention cup 18, thereby cleaning the inner wall surface of the scattering prevention cup 18.

As will be discussed below, the claimed scattering prevention cup is not disclosed or suggested by the applied prior art references, taken alone or in combination. Specifically, **Tomita** teaches a substrate washing device comprising a cleaning chamber 1 for surrounding the substrate (corresponds to the claimed "scattering prevention cup"). However, the cleaning chamber 1 of the Tomita apparatus does not have a tapered portion whose diameter is progressively larger downwardly, as recited in claim 1.

Further, with respect to independent claim 8, the present invention recites a method of processing a substrate comprising processing a substrate with a substrate processing liquid while circumferentially surrounding the substrate held by a substrate holder with a tapered portion whose diameter is progressively larger in a downward direction of a scattering prevention cup, and horizontally supplying a cleaning liquid from a reverse side nozzle to the substrate holder in a direction toward the scattering prevention cup while circumferentially surrounding the substrate held by the substrate holder with a smaller-diameter portion connected to an upper end of the tapered portion of the scattering prevention cup.

As described above, such a feature is not disclosed or suggested by any of applied prior art references, taken alone or in combination. Thus, the method of processing a substrate, which includes employing the claimed feature, is clearly not disclosed or suggested by the collective teachings of the prior art.

In view of the above, it is submitted that the present application is now clearly in condition for allowance. The Examiner therefore is requested to enter the above amendment and pass this case to issue.

In the event that the Examiner has any comments or suggestions of a nature necessary to place this case in condition for allowance, then the Examiner is requested to contact Applicant's undersigned attorney by telephone to promptly resolve any remaining matters.

Respectfully submitted,

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